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ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF RURAL CONFERENCES

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This paper is to treat of the origin and growth of conferences on rural conditions, and as *THE ANNALS* are read by a special class, those whose tendencies are sociological, I wish to emphasize that aspect of the rural problem. To those who have considered the problem approaching it from the rural standpoint the terms are interchangeable almost to the point of identity. The rural problem is rural sociology.

The first meeting that may be called a rural conference was held in 1901 in Morris, Connecticut, and was called at the instance of Rev. F. A. Holden. The first large conference was held at the University of Michigan in 1902, under the combined auspices of the Michigan Political Science Association and the agricultural college of the university.

These widely separated meetings were the result of efforts to bring the specialist into close touch with the more general phases of rural life and to secure breadth and wholeness in considering the problem and assure well-balanced progress. The "problem" arises out of the fact that it has been generally forgotten that the nation's wealth comes from the soil. That truth became obscured in the United States due to the tremendous development of manufactures and mining, resulting in the development of the city and almost complete neglect of the country. What, therefore, can be done to arrest the deterioration of the rural forces, man and soil?

The scattered efforts made toward the solution of the question sprang into the dignity of a "movement" from three events. The first was the action of Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, who in 1905 called upon the governments of the world to send delegates to Rome to consider methods for the promotion of the interests of the rural population. Thirty nations sent delegates to this conference. The United States was represented by David Lubin, of California, to whose initiative the project was due. The call resulted in the formation of the International Institute of Agriculture. The king

has given the Institute a large endowment from his private funds and in consideration of its establishing its headquarters in Rome, has had a palace built for its permanent use. It seeks to ameliorate the conditions of rural life and is making a comparative study of the economic, sociological and financial institutions bearing thereon.

The next great event was President Roosevelt's creation of the National Conservation Commission in June, 1908. This body was requested to undertake the compiling of an inventory of the natural resources of the United States—the forests, mines, rivers and soils. This inventory was printed as a senate document and "is the first inventory of natural resources ever made by any nation, forming one of the most fundamentally important documents ever laid before the American people."

And lastly as contributory to the elevation of the problem into a movement was President Roosevelt's appointment of the Country Life Commission in August, 1908. The tremendous publicity given by the press of the nation to the current progress of the commission's investigations was of inestimable value. The public was continually having its attention directed to the work, with the result that a wide and deep impression was made upon the public mind. This was doubly fortunate, because the refusal of congress to arrange for the adequate distribution of the commission's report would have been largely successful in withholding the results of the investigation from general knowledge. The report shows the general condition of farming life in the open country and points out the larger problems; it indicates ways in which the government, national and state, may show the people how to solve some of these problems and suggests a continuance of the work the commission began. The Spokane Chamber of Commerce printed the report, as the small edition of the government's issue was soon exhausted. The report now is issued as one of a series of volumes in the Young Farmer's Library. The above is mentioned somewhat in detail to show the difficulties that the movement earlier had to contend with and yet how the inherent value of the movement forces itself forward.

I now append two typical programs of state conferences, one of the West and one of the East, and together they excellently serve to illustrate the value of this form of attacking the problem. It will readily be seen that the titles of the programs fall into four divisions—the home, the school, the church, the business.

PROGRAM OF THE MINNESOTA CONSERVATION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
CONGRESS, 1910.

Introductory.

Opening Address—Clinton R. Woodruff.

The Agricultural Resources of Minnesota—The Most Rev. John Ireland.

Practical Conservation and Agricultural Development in Minnesota—Governor Adolph O. Eberhart.

The Public Domain and the Nation's Obligations Regarding Its Disposition—Richard A. Ballinger.

Minnesota: A State on the Eve of a Wonderful Future—Professor Albert F. Woods.

The Conservation of Our Soil—S. D. Works.

Elements of Wealth in Minnesota—P. V. Collins.

Conservation of the Home—Mrs. Margaret J. Blair.

The Government and Conservation—George Otis Smith.

Minnesota Peat: A Resource of the Future—Max Toltz.

A Classification and Use Survey of Minnesota's Resources—Professor Frederick E. Clements.

Agricultural Development in Minnesota—Howard Elliott.

The Farm Wealth of Minnesota—Professor E. V. Robinson.

The Conservation of Capital—James J. Hill.

Agriculture: A Science and a Competitive Business—Professor A. E. Chamberlain.

Minnesota's Past, Present, Future—Dr. Cyrus Northrop.

Soil Fertility as a Factor in Crop Production—Coates P. Bull.

The Farmer as a Factor in Crop Production—Professor A. D. Wilson.

Rotation as a Factor in Crop Production—Professor Andrew Boss.

Business Methods in Farming—B. L. Perry.

Beef, Cattle and Sheep in Minnesota—C. W. Glotzfelter.

"Pigs and Clover" in Minnesota—Forest Henry.

The Dairy Industry in Minnesota—Professor T. L. Haecker.

Advantages of Farm Life to a Woman—Mrs. Agnes Whitney Savage.

Co-operation and Advertising, the Key to the Settlement of Minnesota—D. M. Neill.

The Business Side of Farming in Minnesota—Professor John L. Coulter.

The Eve of a State-Wide Development Movement—George Welsh.

For Education, Progress and Poetry in Minnesota Farming—J. Adam Bede.

For Good Roads, Immigration, Agriculture in the Schools—Senator J. M. Hackney.

Industrial Education in the Country School—George F. Howard.

Public School Agriculture: How Taught and How Connected with the Business of Farming—Dick J. Crosby.

Agriculture in the Country High School—A. M. Duncan.

State-Wide Industrial Education—D. D. Mayne.

Education and Conservation—Governor John Burke.

Education and Business, A Study of Current Conditions—Professor Robert R. Denfield.

Conservation of Human Life—Dr. H. M. Bracken.
Co-Ordination in the Conservation of the Minnesotan—Dr. F. F. Westbrook.
Minnesota's Resources in Human Life—John S. Fulton, M. D.
Pure Food in its Relation to Public Health and Conservation—Dr. Harvey W. Wiley.
Women's Stake in Conservation—Mrs. Caroline Bartlett Crane.
Business Men and Good Country Roads—George M. Palmer.
Building Good Roads Out of the Material at Hand—George W. Cooley.
Highway Legislation and Administration—Robert C. Dunn.
Good Roads as a Factor in Conservative Development—M. O. Eldridge.
The Tar Treatment of Roads—Philip L. Sharples.
New Industrial Enterprises in Minnesota—W. O. McGonagle.
Forestry and Conservation in Minnesota—J. E. Rhodes.
Minnesota's Soil and Mineral Resources—Dr. Charles R. Van Hise.
Waste and Reparation—Henry Wallace.
Waterways and Water-Powers in Minnesota—Col. J. H. Davidson.
The Water Wealth of Minnesota—Francis C. Shenehon.
Canada's Example in Forestry—R. H. Campbell.
What Drainage Is Doing for Minnesota Agricultural Lands—George T. Ralph.
Northern Minnesota: A New Empire—Professor Thomas Shaw.
Farm Drainage as a Factor in Agricultural Conservation—John T. Stewart.
Practical Co-operation—E. N. Tousley.
The Conservation of Human Life—Dr. Edward T. Devine.
The Welfare of the Child—Mrs. Perry Starkweather.
The Garden School—Mary D. LaRue.
Conservation of the Moral Forces of the State—Professor F. E. Webster.
Resolutions.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RURAL PROGRESS ASSOCIATION
COUNTRY LIFE CONFERENCE, PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 14, 15, 16, 1912.

Address of Welcome—The Mayor.
Response—Dr. E. E. Sparks, Chairman of Association.
Mr. J. B. Lippincott, President Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture.
Conservation of Country Life—Gifford Pinchot.
Address—Mr. Nathan C. Schaeffer, Superintendent Public Instruction, Pa.
Address—Hon. N. B. Critchfield, Secretary of Agriculture, Pa.
Country School Improvement (illustrated with the stereopticon)—O. J. Kern, Superintendent Winnebago County Schools, Rockford, Ill.
Recreation for Rural Communities (illustrated with stereopticon)—Dr. Myron T. Scudder, Professor of the Science of Education, Rutgers College.
Federal Aid for Secondary Schools—Dr. T. F. Hunt, Dean of the College of Agriculture, State College, Pa.
Discussion.

Rural School Education (with demonstration)—Miss Alice G. McCloskey, Lecturer, Rural School Education, College of Agriculture, Cornell University.

Libraries in Rural Districts—Hon. T. L. Montgomery, State Librarian, Harrisburg, Pa.

Federal Work in the South—Hon. O. B. Martin, United States Department of Agriculture.

Discussion.

General Topic—*The Railroad and the Farmer.*

R. C. Wright, General Freight Agent, Pennsylvania Railroad, Chairman.

B. H. Gitchell, Secretary Binghamton Chamber of Commerce—The Relation of the Commercial Organization to the Farmer.

D. A. Brodie, United States Department of Agriculture—Work of the Bureau of Farm Management.

P. H. Burnett, Industrial Commissioner, Lehigh Valley Railroad.

F. R. Stevens, Agriculturist, Lehigh Valley Railroad.

R. L. Russell, General Freight Agent, Philadelphia and Reading Railway—The Reading Railroad and the Farmer.

W. A. Burton, General Manager Eastern Shore of Virginia Produce Exchange—Co-operation.

Movements in Agricultural Extension—Professor H. E. Van Norman, College of Agriculture, State College, Pa.

Educational Value of Agriculture—Professor G. N. Lauman, College of Agriculture, Cornell University.

Boys' and Girls' Club Work (illustrated with stereopticon)—Hon. O. B. Martin, United States Department of Agriculture.

General Topic—*The Rural Church.*

Rev. C. O. Bemies, Pastor, McClellandtown Presbyterian Church, Chairman.

Rev. Warren H. Wilson, President, Board of Home Missions.

Rev. G. F. Wells, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Professor Alva Agee, College of Agriculture, State College, Pa.—A Layman's View of the Country Church.

Albert Roberts, Secretary, International Committee of the Y. M. C. A. on County Work—County Work.

Discussion.

Appointment of Committee on Resolutions.

General Topic—*The Farm Home and Rural Sanitation.*

Isolation of Farm Life—Hon. A. B. Farquhar, York, Pa.

Home Economics for the Farm Home—Miss Martha Van Rensselaer, Professor Home Economics, College of Agriculture, Cornell University.

Women and the Grange—Dr. Hannah T. Lyon, Officer, Pennsylvania State Grange.

The Grange—Hon. William T. Creasy, Master, Pennsylvania State Grange.

Rural Sanitation—Dr. Samuel G. Dixon, Commissioner, State Department of Health, Harrisburg, Pa.

Clean Milk Production—Dr. C. J. Marshall, State Veterinarian, Harrisburg, Pa.

Adoption of Resolutions.

The Country Life Movement—Dr. L. H. Bailey, Dean, College of Agriculture, Cornell University.

Country Roads—Superintendent E. M. Bigelow, Department Public Highways, Harrisburg, Pa.

The Rural School—Professor Philander P. Claxton, Commissioner of Education, Washington, D. C.

The observer of sociological activities notes that when those topics are treated in conference in relation to cities, the classic instance being the *Pittsburgh Survey*, they fall at once into the sphere and attention, in fact originate, with sociologists. It must be so with the rural problem. The chief difference between the two activities is merely a more or less separation of the human units, urban, congestion; rural, segregation. There are great underlying principles connected with the rural problem that need the attention and deep study of the political economist. These conferences are, therefore, providing data necessary to be considered by those who are trained to hunt for the underlying social laws, and as such items are now being gathered with but little, if any, method, it is imperative that they be collated and examined to the end that what gaps exist, they be indicated. I believe it is quite within bounds to state that not since John Stuart Mill has any great economist, therefore lesser men, given proper attention to rural economics. Our schools, colleges and universities all need to direct the young students' attention to this question, so that when they go out in the world they will have some idea of the interrelation of *Rus and Urbe*. One result of these conferences is the forming of a group of young economists in the agricultural colleges who are specializing in rural economics.

One may call attention to another aspect generally overlooked, and that is the value of an agricultural education as being equal to the courses in the "humanities" as a means of culture in its fine sense. I append a curriculum which shows how broad is the training given and which naturally includes the two phases of education, the habits of concentration and observation, the former through the languages and mathematics and the latter in the sciences, quite lifting the agricultural training beyond the merely materialistic. The subdivision of the syllabus on rural economics has such familiar

headings as capital, labor, cost-production (quite a modern term), marketing, records and accounts.

SPECIMEN CURRICULUM

	Hours.		Hours.
Algebra.....	75	Modern languages.....	340
Geometry.....	40	Psychology.....	60
Trigonometry.....	40	Ethics or logic.....	40
Physics (class-room work).....	75	Political economy.....	60
Physics (laboratory work).....	75	General history.....	80
Chemistry (class-room work).....	75	Constitutional law.....	50
Chemistry (laboratory work).....	75		
English.....	200	Total.....	1,285

Through the influence of these conferences several states have established country life commissions with appropriations for the work, an instance being California with an appropriation of \$100,000. The chamber of commerce in many cities have their committee on rural affairs. To the Spokane Chamber of Commerce is due the organization of a national conference on rural conditions held in 1911.

The writer in closing cannot but refer to those distinguished men who have been the early leaders in organizing these conferences. To President K. D. Butterfield, of Massachusetts; Dean L. H. Bailey, New York; Dean T. F. Hunt, of Pennsylvania; Professor H. C. Taylor, Wisconsin; Professor J. L. Coulter, of Minnesota; Assistant Secretary, W. M. Hays, Director A. T. True and Mr. D. F. Crosby, all of Washington, D. C., are largely due the honors for the success these meetings have attained.